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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by AARP, Altrusa International, Armenian International Women's Association, Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'i International Community, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Association of Women in Radio and Television, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, National Council of Women of the United States, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Soroptimist International, Trickle up Program, United Nations Association of the United States of America, United States Committee for UNIFEM, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, World Union for Progressive Judaism and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.



Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, all members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, direct your attention to the outstanding leadership of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as it celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of its important work to foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

UNIFEM focuses its activities on four strategic areas:

- ☐ Reducing feminized poverty
- ☐ Ending violence against women
- ☐ Reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls
- ☐ Achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war

In each of these areas UNIFEM's catalytic work has contributed substantially to the priority theme of this year's CSW, "the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child".

UNIFEM works with women in over 100 countries at the community level where discrimination and violence against the girl child begin in families even before birth, with prenatal sex selection and female infanticide, and can continue throughout their lives. In many parts of the world girls are married while they are still children, a situation which often curtails their education, limits access to health care and family planning, makes them economically and socially dependent, leaves them vulnerable to violence, and deprives them of opportunities for self-fulfillment.

UNIFEM aims to redress and address the gender inequalities and discrimination of women and girls through a rights based approach to all its work. The underpinning in UNIFEM's approach to each of its strategic focus areas is to strengthen institutions for the protection and promotion of rights and participation.

UNIFEM has assisted women throughout the world to use their country's periodic reports to the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, to report violations of their country's commitments to women's equal rights. UNIFEM has also worked with women's advocates to change national constitutions, create new laws, improve the judicial system and create new policies to conform to their CEDAW treaty obligations regarding the rights of women and girls.

UNIFEM, in partnership with several NGOs, was in the forefront of advocacy for the adoption of the landmark Security Council resolution #1325 on women, peace and security. This resolution recognizes the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, calls for the full implementation of humanitarian human rights laws to protect women and girls during and after conflict, directs attention to the special needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, singles out protection against gender-based violence, especially rape, and requests

that the Secretary General conduct a study including data on women and girls in armed conflict. UNIFEM has been monitoring the implementation of this resolution in conflict areas around the world and provides updates on specific country situations on its Women, War and Peace Web Portal.

UNIFEM will celebrate its tenth year as manager of the UN General Assembly Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women in 2007. Trust Fund grants support small innovative projects that impact laws, policies and attitudes that reduce violence against women at local, national and regional levels. Since 1997 the Trust Fund has made grants of \$10 million US dollars to 198 projects in 100 countries, but there are many more applications than the Fund can support. As part of the founding resolution of the Trust Fund, UNIFEM reports regularly to the General Assembly on activities to eliminate violence against women and girls.

UNIFEM's approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic emphasizes the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS infection due to their continued low status in societies. Its programs for the past seven years have focused on eradicating gender inequalities and empowering women and girls, including the role men and boys can play in changing attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality. Most recently, UNIFEM supports the "Three Ones" principles to transform national response to AIDS through more effective use of resources and results-based management.

Throughout its thirty years, UNIFEM's leadership in promoting rights for women and girls has created opportunities for substantial change in their social, economic and political lives. UNIFEM will continue to address the difficult and multi-faceted discriminations that women and girls around the world face every day working with many partners at all levels to affect positive change. We wholeheartedly endorse their efforts.